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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONFIRMED COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN PORTAGE COUNTY

June 5, 2020 as of 3 p.m.

Stevens Point, WI—Portage County Health and Human Services-Division of Public Health is confirming a COVID-19 outbreak in Portage County. Fifteen (15) additional Portage County residents have tested positive for COVID-19. Cases have identified being at several Portage County businesses during a time that they were contagious, asymptomatic and possibly shedding the virus. Some of the cases also attended a college graduation party in Stevens Point. Public Health staff have been working on confirming positive cases and identifying close contacts. Isolation orders have been issued to individuals who have tested positive and quarantine orders for all identified close contacts. The investigation is ongoing, and public health officials anticipate that more positive cases will be identified over the next several days.

Members of the public, who feel that that they are at risk of exposure are asked to self-monitor for symptoms for a period of 14 days. The potential of exposure to the general public is considered to be the greatest from May 30 to June 4, 2020. Members of the public who were at the following establishments, and did not practice social distancing, are asked to self-monitor for symptoms: Papa Joe's Bar, Len Dudas Motors, The Final Score, Partners Pub and Grill, Silver Coach Restaurant and Amber Grill. Should symptoms develop, individuals should contact their medical provider and inquire about being tested. Individuals are encouraged not to go in for testing without making an appointment.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fatigue and body/muscle aches
- Diarrhea, vomiting and nausea

In order to assess members of the public who may have been in contact with a positive case, Portage County has requested COVID-19 community testing through the Wisconsin National Guard. Testing will be provided without charge and no appointment will be needed. Once the request is confirmed by the State Emergency Operations Center the Division of Public Health will provide a media release with date and time for drive-thru testing. Testing will again be conducted at Portage County Health and Human Services.

Public Health investigations are initiated when two or more cases are identified in a workplace, group housing, or other setting such as a bar or restaurant. A case investigation and contact tracing are conducted with all people reported with COVID-19, regardless of the setting. In situations where it is not possible to specifically identify contacts from an exposure during which adequate physical distancing was not maintained, a press release is issued to allow the public to better know their potential exposure risk.

“The Division of Public Health is working with individuals and local businesses to conduct a thorough investigation to track, trace, and contain the virus,” said Public Health Officer Gary Garske. “We want to remind everyone that COVID-19 is still present in our community. While everyone is anxiously wanting to resume normal routines, during this pandemic, community members must be smart about how they return to their normal lives and recognize that certain situations are still not safe for yourself or others in our community. We owe it to everyone to do what we can to keep each other safe and healthy.”

If you have been in contact with someone who is a confirmed case of COVID-19, staff from your local health department or the state health department will be in touch to notify you of potential exposure. When they call you, you will be asked if you are experiencing symptoms. If you have symptoms, they will help you understand when to seek medical help, how to get tested, and options if you have concerns about being able to safely quarantine or isolate for the required time.

While vulnerable populations including the elderly and immunocompromised are at an increased risk for serious and life-threatening complications, anyone can develop symptoms or become seriously ill if infected with COVID-19. COVID-19 can be spread by asymptomatic people, meaning people who are not experiencing symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. This is why it's important to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet from others who are not in your household and wear a cloth face covering when you are in public.

To prevent COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching your face in public
- Stay home when sick
- Practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet from people not in your household
- Avoid large gatherings
- Wear a cloth face covering in situations where physical distancing can't be maintained

If you have questions, please call or email our department at (715) 345-5907 or PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us. If you have general COVID-19 questions call 2-1-1.

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